

Message Text

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47

ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, EI, UK (NI)

SUBJECT: SOME HOPE REMAINS FOR NI TRUCE

1. DUBLIN PAPERS AND CONTACTS STILL HOPE THAT PROVISIONAL IRA WILL RENEW ITS TRUCE IN NI, EITHER BY DECLARING FORMAL CEASE-FIRE OR BY SIMPLY SUSPENDING VIOLENCE. ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN SOME VIOLENT ACTS BY PROVOS SINCE TRUCE WAS CALLED OFF, VIOLENCE HAS BEEN AT FAIRLY LOW LEVEL. MAJOR VICTIMS HAVE BEEN PROVOS THEMSELVES (THREE DEAD), ONE TEENAGER AND ONE SEVEN-YEAR-OLD. DEATH OF LATTER CAUSED PUBLIC INDIGNATION AND HAS INCREASED PRESSURE OF OPINION FOR REVIEWED TRUCE. DEMONSTRATIONS FOR PEACE CONTINUE TO ATTRACT SIZABLE CROWDS ON BOTH SIDES OF BORDER.

2. DISSENT WITHIN PROVO "ARMY COUNCIL" APPEARS KEY TO ERRATIC PROVO BEHAVIOR. HAWKS AND DOVES ARE REPORTED TO BE ALMOST EVENLY BALANCED. BOTH APPEAR TO HAVE VERY STRANGE PERCEPTIONS, AND ANY MEANINGFUL PROJECTION WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO FOCUS ON PERSONALITY FACTORS. THERE ARE FEW LOGICAL REASONS WHY PROVOS SHOULD BE WILLING TO ACCEPT TRUCE NOW WHEN THEY HAVE BEEN REFUSING TO DO SO FOR LAST TWO YEARS. THEY HAVE, IN FACT, MUCH LESS TO GAIN NOW THAN THEY COULD HAVE ACHIEVED BY AN EARLIER PEACE MOVE.

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3. GOI HAS CONTINUED PRESSURE ON PROVOS DESPITE TRUCE. POLICE

MANAGED TO ARREST A SECOND ARMY COUNCIL MEMBER, J.B. O'HAGAN. LIKE KEVIN MALLON (ARRESTED A FEW DAYS EARLIER), O'HAGAN IS CONSIDERED A FANATIC. IT IS BY NO MEANS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THE TWO NEW MEMBERS OF ARMY COUNCIL (NOT KNOWN) WILL BE AN IMPROVEMENT.

4. AT SAME TIME, GOI APPEARS TO BE SLIGHTLY RELAXING ITS OPPOSITION TO TALKS BETWEEN PROVOS AND BRITISH. GOI ALSO SEEMS MORE HOPEFUL THAT TRUCE, IF RENEWED, MIGHT NOW PRODUCE POSITIVE RESULTS. IN A CAUTIOUS TV INTERVIEW, FONMIN FITZGERALD HAS VOICED WHAT HAS BEEN GOI POLICY ON INTERNMENT FOR SOME TIME: NO IRISH PRESSURE ON BRITISH, BUT A HOPE THAT INTERNMENT PHASE-OUT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED RAPIDLY, THEREBY DEPRIVING PROVOS OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT.

5. COMMENT: IF IN FACT PROVOS SUSPEND VIOLENCE AGAIN WE WOULD SEE FIRST SOLID GROUNDS FOR OPTIMISM. BUT TRUCE IS STILL IN THE BALANCE. EVEN IF IT COMES, THERE IS NO REASON FOR CONFIDENCE IN ABILITY OF IRA TO CALL OFF ALL ITS VOLUNTEERS, OR TO KEEP THEM OUT OF ACTION PERMANENTLY. IT MAKES MORE SENSE TO TALK OF DECREASED VIOLENCE RATHER THAN PEACE. THIS COULD, NEVERTHELESS, BE QUITE SIGNIFICANT, SINCE PROVO TERRORISM HAS ALWAYS SET OFF A CHAIN REACTION OF VIOLENCE ELSEWHERE.

6. EVEN THIS LIMITED OPTIMISM MUST BE BASED ON THE PRESSURE OF PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST PROVOS RATHER THAN ON ANY HOPE THAT IRA HAS SUDDENLY TURNED OVER A NEW LEAF. IF PROVOS HAVE ANY THOUGHT OF TRADING THEIR GUNS IN FOR POLITICAL POWER, THEY ARE LIKELY TO CHANGE THEIR MIND WHEN THEY FIND OUT THAT PEOPLE WILL STILL NOT VOTE FOR THEM. BY THIS TIME, HOWEVER, THEY MIGHT HAVE DIFFICULTY IN REVIEWING THE VIOLENCE.
MOORE

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